



EPISODE 2x01  
"LONELY PLACES"

Written and directed by  
George W. Krubski

Selected scenes culled from the "SERENITY" Movie Shooting Script by Joss Whedon

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Head Writer & Executive Producer: George W. Krubski  
Producers: Matt Engstrom & David Elmer  
Art Director: Sean Young

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## Teaser

### **EXT. SPACE – ESTABLISHING**

*Serenity* sails forward through the black.

The ship's name is painted on the nose, under the bridge, which sticks out from the body like a craning neck. The body is bulbous, with propulsion engines on either side and a giant glowing engine at the back. There are two small shuttles tucked in over the "wings" of the engines. It's not the sleekest ship in the 'Verse, to be sure.

TITLE: One month later

### **EXT. SPACE – ORBITING CONSTANTINE – DAY**

As *Serenity* hits atmo, the propulsion engines take over and she starts to rock a bit, noise filling our ears. We come around the front, at the windows and into the bridge to see the Captain, MALCOLM "MAL" REYNOLDS, standing and watching.

At that moment, a small piece of the nose breaks off and goes flying past the window.

### **INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE – CONTINUOUS**

The bridge is small: two pilot seats on either side, and a tangle of wires and machinery all about.

Mal wears the knee-length brown coat and boots of an old Independent. Gun at his hip. He's not unlike the ship – he's seen a bit of the world and it left him, emotionally at least, weathered. Right now, though, he's mostly startled.

MAL

What was that?

He's addressing the pilot, WASH. Flight gear and a Hawaiian shirt, toy dinosaurs populating his station – no old soldier, but just as startled.

WASH

Whoa! Did you see that—

The ship bucks.

MAL

Was that the primary buffer panel?

WASH  
It did seem to resemble—

MAL  
Did the primary buffer panel just fall off my gorram ship  
for no apparent reason?

Another buck.

WASH  
Looks like.

MAL  
I thought Kaylee checked our entry couplings! I have a  
very clear memory of—

WASH  
Yeah, well if she doesn't give us some extra flow from the  
engine room to offset the burnthrough, this landing is  
gonna get pretty interesting.

MAL  
Define "interesting."

WASH  
"Oh god, oh god, we're all gonna die?"

MAL (hits the com)  
This is the Captain. There's a little problem with our entry  
sequence. We may experience some slight turbulence.  
And then explode.  
(to Wash, exiting)  
Just get us on the ground!

WASH  
That part'll happen, pretty definitely.

### **INT. SERENITY – FOREDECK HALL – CONTINUOUS**

On either side of the hall are ladders leading down to crew's personal quarters. As Mal passes, the hulking mercenary JAYNE comes up out of his bunk, carrying a number of rifles and grenades.

JAYNE  
We gonna explode? I don't wanna explode.

MAL

Jayne, how many weapons you plan on bringing? I don't plan on any shootin' takin' place.

JAYNE

Well, what you plan and what takes place ain't ever exactly been similar.

MAL

No grenades.

Jayne groans. First Mate ZOE enters from the lower level. Her mode of dress and military deference mark her as a war buddy of Mal's. Mal nods as he walks past her, then looks back at Jayne.

MAL (cont'd)

No grenades.

ZOE

We crashing again, sir?

MAL

That'd be up to your husband.

ZOE

(to Jayne)

Are those grenades?

JAYNE

Cap'n doesn't want 'em.

ZOE

We're just checking out the place, not occupying it.

All this plays in the background as Mal heads into:

### **INT. SERENITY – DINING ROOM – CONTINUOUS**

It's the communal space of the ship, homey and messy. There is food left lying on the table. Mal swipes a dumpling from a plate, pops it into his mouth as another jolt rocks him and sends most of the tableware clattering to the floor.

MAL

(calling out)

Kaylee!

He enters:

## **INT. SERENITY – AFT HALL/ENGINE ROOM – CONTINUOUS**

MAL  
(still calling)  
Kaylee, what in the sphincter of hell are you playing at?

The hall leads to the rust-brown chaos that is the engine room. Working around the engine in a forest of wires, sparks and smoke is the sweetly pretty mechanic, KAYLEE. She passes Mal with a slightly impatient smile as he stands in the doorway, raising his voice above the din.

MAL  
We got the primary buffer—

KAYLEE  
Everything's shiny, Cap'n. Not to fret.

MAL  
You told me—  
(jolt)  
You told me the entry couplings would hold for another week!

KAYLEE  
(working)  
That was six months ago, Cap'n.

MAL  
My ship don't crash. She crashes, you crashed her.

Steam and electricity shoot at him, backing him up.

He turns to see – and is startled by – RIVER TAM, a waif-like teenager with haunted eyes. Just the wrong side of creepy.

RIVER  
Got my inoculation. Ready to go.

MAL  
You ain't goin' nowhere, little one. Not til we know what we're dealin' with.

He steps around her, heading down a side corridor that has steps leading down to:

## **INT. SERENITY – PASSENGER DORM – CONTINUOUS**

River is right on his heels as we lead them down the stairs.

RIVER  
I'm good at hide and seek. You know that.

MAL  
This ain't time for fun and games, girl.

Mal reaches the base of the stairs, pauses, and looks back at River appraisingly.

MAL (cont'd)  
Your brother wants to watch you, you can play. Might  
learn to pull your own weight yet.

The passenger dorm has a time-worn feel that most of the ship shares. Except for the sterile blue of:

### **INT. SERENITY – INFIRMARY – CONTINUOUS**

Into which Mal steps. River pokes her head in behind, smiling at her brother, SIMON TAM, who is packing medical equipment into a carrying case. Simon contrasts the Captain entirely in dress and manner and is implacably proper.

MAL  
Near ready, doctor?

SIMON  
(finishing with the case)  
I hope your friend's not injured. We're nearly out of  
antibiotics and morphine. We really need to hit a civilized  
planet to restock—

MAL  
And so we can run into more bounty hunters and Alliance  
thugs. That's a fun trip.

RIVER  
Simon! Mal says I can play!

MAL  
I didn't say—

River rushes away, and Mal offers a shake of his head to Simon. Simon picks up the carrying case and both men follow River into:

### **INT. SERENITY – CARGO BAY – CONTINUOUS**

They enter the biggest space on the ship. Giant doors sit at the front, which will open upon landing to reveal a lowering ramp. The HOVER-MULE, a four man

hovercraft, hangs from chains near the ceiling. Catwalks surround the space, leading up at the front to the foredeck hall.

SIMON

I'm not sure we should be taking River—

The ship bucks.

MAL

Honestly, doctor, I think we may really crash this time anyway.

Zoe and Jayne, armed and dangerous, come down the stairs from the catwalk to join Mal, Simon, and River on the floor.

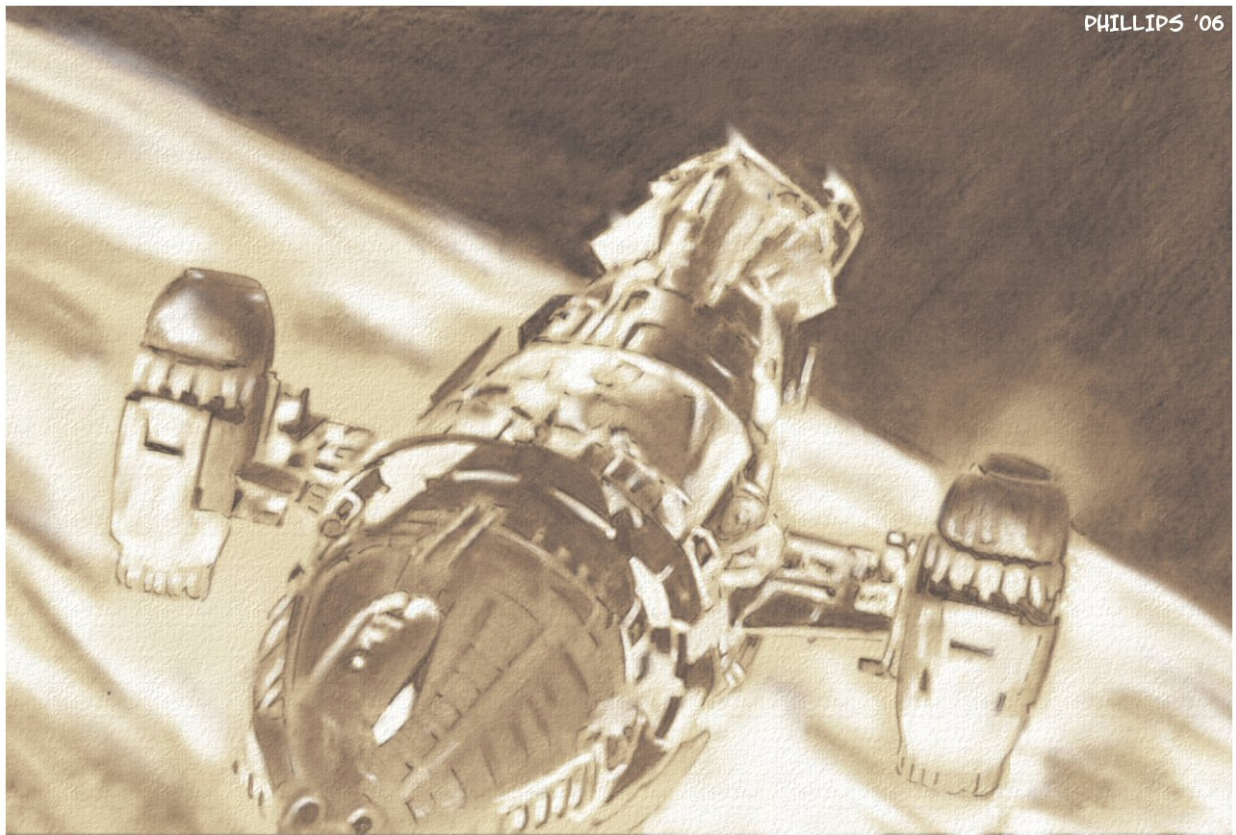
MAL

(to Zoe)

Wash gonna straighten this boat out before we get flattened?

ZOE

Like a downy feather, sir. Nobody flies like my mister.



## **EXT. CONSTANTINE – DAY – ESTABLISHING**

Constantine Refueling and Trading Post is a ramshackle little town (home to no more than a few dozen) consisting of a sum total of one street and surrounded by hard-packed dirt that's been scorched in an attempt to make landing fields. Some larger fuel tanks rim the town, making the place look like the space equivalent of a battered small town gas station that's been languishing since the 1950s.

*Serenity* sails overhead, then settles in for a landing on the outskirts of town.

WASH (VO)

No sign of Millie's ship, Captain. Or any ship, for that matter. Or anyone. Place looks abandoned.

## **EXT. CONSTANTINE – STREET – DAY**

Most of the buildings are two stories: homes built over small storefronts. Signs, sun-faded and peeling, proclaim sales on feed, engine parts, puppies, bait, ice, and Blue Sun Cola. One prominent sign notes that the Constantine Refueling and Trading Post was established in 2486 by Edgar Constantine.

Mal, Zoe, Jayne, Simon, and River walk cautiously down the street. River trails a bit, and Simon keeps turning to look for her.

ZOE

Wash is right, sir. Place is empty.

MAL

Well, it shouldn't be. Millie should be here. Bernabe got the call that she made it, but not that she was leavin'.

JAYNE

Maybe she forgot. You know how women-folk can get.

Mal ignores him and moves to a SMALL PILE of goods in the middle of the street. He bends down to examine it.

ZOE

Sir?

MAL

Food. Sealed protein packs mostly.

They all look around. Items seem to be strewn all around, some collected into small piles. Creepy.



JAYNE  
(nervous)  
What d'ya figure, Mal? Reavers?

MAL  
I don't think so.

JAYNE  
Gypsies?

Simon and Zoe look at him.

JAYNE (cont'd)  
There's gypsies on Paquin. An' on Earth-that-Was,  
gypsies kidnapped babies and et `em.

SIMON  
Yes, Jayne. That's it. Gypsies from Earth-that-Was  
traveled out here to this <piece of crap> moon to try to  
find some babies to—

A RUSTLING NOISE startles them all (except River). Mal, Zoe, and Jayne whirl and  
aim their guns at—

A mangy DOG with a half-eaten apple in its mouth.

RIVER  
Puppy!

#### **INT. CONSTANTINE – SECOND STORY WINDOW – SAME TIME**

We look down at the crew from the point of view of someone half-hidden behind a  
curtain.

#### **EXT. CONSTANTINE – STREET – SAME TIME**

As River pets the dog in the background, the others cluster together.

MAL  
Scavengers. Slavers, most like.

SIMON  
Slavers? What makes you think that?

ZOE  
No corpses.

RIVER

Eyes.

The group turns to look at her as she stands.

RIVER

Eyes on us. Always watching. Seeing.

Mal and Zoe scan the area, while Jayne hunkers down nervously, and Simon stands there like a prime target.

MAL

(pointing)

There.

One of the buildings has a tiny SECURITY CAMERA hidden under its eaves.

MAL

Good eyes, little one. Zoe, see if you can find us some recordings.

Zoe moves off. River looks up at a WINDOW where the curtain rustles slightly, then looks down at the dog, shaking her head and indicating Mal as if he's an idiot. The dog wags its tail.

## **INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE – DAY**

Wash is putting the com back as Kaylee comes in.

KAYLEE

Any word?

WASH

Captain thinks it's slavers. He wants us to be ready to get to Haven quick as possible. We're only an hour out, and he wants to tell Bernabe face-to-face.

KAYLEE

They all okay in town?

WASH

(smiles)

Doc's fine, if that's what you're asking.

KAYLEE

No, that's not what I—

WASH

Town looks deserted from up close, too. Our birds should be back in the coop any minute now.

### **EXT. CONSTANTINE – STREET**

Mal, Simon, and Jayne stand over a pile of batteries and other equipment, Jayne toeing the items with his boot.

MAL

Just threw everything of value out the windows. Started piling things up in the middle of the street—

He cuts himself off as the dog, playing with River, barks.

JAYNE

Why didn't they take this stuff with 'em?

SIMON

They must've decided to leave before—

Another bark.

MAL

River, will you shut that <cursed> dog—

He spots movement in one of the upper windows and rushes at River.

MAL

Down!

As a SNIPER hidden behind curtains opens fire, Mal plows into River, pushing her to the relative safety of a front porch.

### **INT. CONSTANTINE – OFFICE – SAME TIME**

In a small, dusty office filled with supplies, Zoe has found the heart of the security set-up. There are six different cameras, each sending a feed to a different little screen. She is in the process of rewinding back through the feeds when she hears a MUFFLED GUNSHOT outside.

Zoe rushes out of the room, but not before she pops out the DATA-HOLDER the cameras record to.

**EXT. CONSTANTINE – PORCH – SAME TIME**

Mal, gun in hand, huddles protectively in front of River. Random gunfire rains down, not hitting them, but keeping them pinned.

RIVER  
Eyes.

MAL  
Jayne! What do we got?

**EXT. CONSTANTINE – ANOTHER PORCH – SAME TIME**

Jayne and Simon are hiding behind an overturned chair.

JAYNE  
(yelling)  
Two snipers, looks like! Prolly tryin' ta flush us out or  
keep us pinned til help comes!

MAL (OS)  
Don't let that happen!

JAYNE  
(muttering)  
Don't let that...

Jayne stands up, tries to take a shot. A bullet comes dangerously close, shattering a nearby wooden railing and sending fragments into Jayne's face, cutting him. Simon pulls him back down.

**EXT. CONSTANTINE – MAL'S PORCH – SAME TIME**

Mal risks poking his head up. Down the street, he sees a YOUNG SLAVER coming out the front door of one of the buildings, drawing a bead on Jayne, but he doesn't have a good angle to help.

MAL  
Jayne!

**EXT. CONSTANTINE – STREET – SAME TIME**

Zoe steps out into the fray. Calmly shoots the initial sniper.

This gives Jayne the opening he needs to pop up and take out the SECOND SNIPER, who was pinning down Mal. As the second sniper falls from his window, tumbling to the ground, Zoe and Jayne both turn on the young slaver.

MAL

Take one alive, gorrammit! Can't interrogate no dead folk!

Zoe shoots out the slaver's knee, saving him from Jayne's lethal headshot.

MOMENTS LATER

Mal, Zoe, Jayne, and Simon stand over the young slaver, who lies on the porch.

YOUNG SLAVER

(crying)

There's just the three of us! I swear!

Mal gives Jayne a little nod. As Jayne moves forward, Zoe looks away.

SIMON

Captain, I don't think—

Mal silences the doctor with a glare. Simon looks on angrily as Jayne, with more than a little malicious glee, grinds his foot against the slaver's wounded knee.

YOUNG SLAVER

S'the truth!

JAYNE

(shrugs)

I believe him.

MAL

(to Simon)

Get him to the ship.

Zoe moves to help Simon with the injured slaver. Mal won't meet her eyes. As they walk off, Mal turns to Jayne.

MAL

We're on Haven in an hour. I want to know everything this kid knows.

(off Jayne's growing smile)

Do what you need to.

## Act One

### INT. IMAGES ON MONITOR – CONSTANTINE – STREET

The quality of the images on the monitor is poor, black and white, jumpy, filled with snow and static. A timestamp in the corner reads 16:13:26 (with the seconds counting up), and the silent screen displays the gunfight.

MAL (VO)

Further back.

The image smears into static and rewinds to a timestamp of 14:46:34, the screen showing the three scavengers piling goods in the middle of the street.

JAYNE (VO)

Told ya he's tellin' the truth.

MAL (VO)

Further.

Timestamp is 13:50:00, and a small group of mangy looking well-armed SLAVERS (a half dozen or so) are directing two dozen CITIZENS through the streets.

BOOK (VO)

So... Slavers then.

MAL (VO)

Looks like. Jayne, forward. To the part I marked.

The screen shifts again, the timestamp changing to 13:53:33. The scene is similar, but among those on the screen is MILDRED, late 30s, no-nonsense.

BERNABE (VO)

Millie...

On the screen, CAPTAIN LACHLAN, leader of the slavers, eating an apple and wearing a very fine hat, motions for Mildred to be brought to him. As she is pushed forward at gunpoint, he takes a final bite from his apple and tosses it in the street.

JAYNE (VO)

Wait for it.

Lachlan and Mildred argue silently, then Mildred slaps him hard enough to knock the hat off his head.

## **INT. HAVEN – CHURCH – DAY**

Mal, Jayne, Zoe, BERNABE (30s, could pass for a relative of Mal's, without quite the wear and tear), and SHEPHERD BOOK (an aging, working-class preacher) stand in a circle around the monitor.

The church they're in will be able to hold more than a hundred when it's complete, but right now it's very much a work in progress, with seats being built by hand, partially painted walls, and tools all over the place.

BERNABE

That's my Millie. So what now?

MAL

Now we go after 'em. We get her back.

BERNABE

Mal, I can't afford—

ZOE

We ain't askin'.

JAYNE

What? Why not?

Mal gives Jayne a look, and the mercenary backs down.

BOOK

Do we know where they're headed, Captain?

MAL

He does.

Mal indicates the corner of the room, where the young slaver is tied to a chair. He looks worse for the wear, the trip to Haven apparently not having been a fun ride for him. His face is bruised and cut, and one of his eyes is swollen shut.

MAL (cont'd)

Says he's new to the crew—this Captain Lachlan's been lookin' to expand—but the deal goes down on Boros.

BERNABE

How do we know he's telling the truth?

JAYNE

(sinister)

I believe him.

BOOK  
(disapproving)  
I'm sure you do.

Mal ignores the interchange, keeping his eyes on Bernabe.

MAL  
I'm acquainted with some folks on Boros, got no love of  
slavers. Expect they can point us in the right direction.

ZOE  
From what the boy says, they loaded most everyone onto  
Millie's ship. *Serenity's* faster. We should be able to get to  
Boros no more than half hour after they set down. We'll  
get her back for you, Bernabe.

She reaches forward and gives his shoulder a comforting squeeze.

BERNABE  
I'm coming.

MAL  
You don't have to—

BERNABE  
Yes. I do.

Mal nods. Book looks past him at the injured slaver.

BOOK  
I think I'd like to come, too.

### **EXT. HAVEN – CHURCH – DAY**

The church is as unfinished outside as in. Zoe and Bernabe are joined by Wash, who was sitting in a chair near the church's entrance, waiting for them to come out, while Mal and Book walk down:

### **EXT. HAVEN – STREET – DAY – CONTINUOUS**

MAL  
Building's comin' along fine.

BOOK  
It's a work in progress.



MAL

Ain't we all?

BOOK

(smiling)

It's not a church yet, you know. Just a space. As our young River might say, it's waiting to be a church.

The two men walk in comfortable silence for a few beats, nodding greeting to a cluster of FOLK who pass by.

MAL

Be good to have you back onboard, Preacher. Even under the circumstances.

BOOK

Good to be back, Mal. Good to see old friends.

(beat)

But there's something I should like to talk to you about while we're still alone.

Book stops walking, and so does Mal.

BOOK (cont'd)

The condition of that young slaver...

MAL

I didn't do it. Ain't my way. You know that.

BOOK

But you allowed Jayne to do it, didn't you? Mal, it's—

MAL

Kid's a slaver, Shepherd! What Jayne done to him ain't near what he deserves!

BOOK

Not our place to pass such judgment.

MAL

Seems like you think it's yours, Preacher.

(uncomfortable beat)

An' it ain't like I wanted to do it. We needed information quick as we could get it.

BOOK

This is how it begins, son. With necessity. Easy choices. Small decisions.

MAL  
How what begins?

But Book looks past Mal, at something far away, or perhaps long ago.

**INT. HAVEN – CHURCH – DAY**

Jayne sits in a half-assembled pew, staring at the bound, scared slaver.

YOUNG SLAVER  
You gonna kill me?

JAYNE  
Not yet. But maybe.

The slaver reacts.

JAYNE (cont'd)  
All depends on us findin' our friend okay. If there's  
anything you're holdin' out on, best you tell me now.

The slaver flinches and shakes his head, indicating he knows nothing more. Jayne turns to the sound of the door opening, and DEREK comes in. Mangy, dirty, wearing a belt heavy with tools, he's just come from a shift in the mines. Jayne stands and the two men greet each other with casual comfort.

DEREK  
This the guy?

JAYNE  
Yep. Anything happens to us, you kill him.

DEREK  
Anything happens to you folk, he'll wish he was with ya  
when it did.

Derek sits down in the chair Jayne vacated, looking directly at the slaver.

DEREK (cont'd)  
You know, Millie's a good friend of mine. Helped me get a  
second chance in this life. I find out she's been ill-used by  
your crew—

YOUNG SLAVER  
It ain't like that! We ain't like that! Just business. Sell 'em  
for labor and what-not. We don't touch the merchandise...

The slaver trails off, clearly hiding something.

DEREK  
(menacingly)  
But?

SLAVER  
Captain Lachlan took a shine to her. Said she had more spine than most men he knows.

JAYNE  
Best hope he don't touch her, little man.

Derek reaches for something on his belt.

DEREK  
Anything gets done to her, gets done to you.

Jayne and Derek grin menacingly as Derek revs a handheld POWERDRILL in a manner that's both sexually and painfully suggestive.

#### **INT. SERENITY – CARGO HOLD – DAY**

The airlock doors are open, the ramp down, as Mal, Simon, Kaylee, and Book stand in a circle talking and laughing. River stands apart, watching Book.

KAYLEE  
—convinced them he was a preacher and it was the Lord's own will that the Captain be released.

MAL  
Well, see, I was workin' on my very own daring escape plan—

BOOK  
(to Simon)  
Truthfully?

SIMON  
Well, truth had very little to do with it, Shepherd.

KAYLEE  
You should've heard the fire and brimstone speech he gave!

JAYNE (OS)  
Boy's got a brass pair, ain't no denying that.

Jayne stomps up the ramp.

MAL  
(to Jayne)  
Let Wash know we're ready to go.

Jayne nods and heads up the stairs. Simon uses the opportunity to draw Mal away to speak a little more privately while Book and Kaylee continue to talk.

### **INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE – SAME TIME**

Wash preps the ship while Zoe and Bernabe stand.

BERNABE  
Sissy Temkin's watchin' the little ones. Loves kids but never had none of her own.

ZOE  
I'm sure they'll be fine.

WASH  
We'll get her back, Bern. Maybe you should stay...

BERNABE  
Wasn't at Serenity Valley, but I still know how to fight.

WASH  
Probably much better than I do.

BERNABE  
(smiling at Wash)  
Should probably go settle in. Never did much like breakin' atmo. Turns my stomach into butterflies and angry kittens.

WASH  
We'll see you through this okay.

Bernabe nods a farewell and heads out to the hall. Zoe and Wash watch him go.

ZOE  
That poor man.

WASH  
We'll get her back.  
(beat)  
Right?

ZOE

What he must be going through... I don't know what I'd do if I thought I'd lost you.

She puts her hand on his shoulder.

WASH

We settle down somewhere, you don't need to worry overmuch about that. This is the third time we've been on Haven this month. Man could settle down here. Make a life. Raise some kids. Not be shot at so much.

ZOE

We already have a home. Can have babies just as easy in space as dirtside.

WASH

Remember the part about the shooting? Or how about that bounty hunter that stabbed you last week?

She takes the hand away.

ZOE

(tight)

We lived on Haven, might be you we're tryin' to rescue from slavers, dear. Ain't no safe places in this 'Verse.

They both realize this is an argument neither can win, and they're saved from continuing it when Jayne comes in.

JAYNE

Cap'n says we're ready to go.

They both look at him.

JAYNE (cont'd)

("duh")

What?

## **INT. SERENITY – CARGO HOLD – DAY**

Mal closes the ramp and airlock doors while he and Simon talk. Kaylee and Book are in quiet conversation across the room, and River lingers nearby.

SIMON

Is this really a good idea? Heading to Boros, I mean?

MAL

*gao-WAHN de FWotzoo* <Buddha's testes!>, first Jayne and now you? I'm well aware there ain't no coin in it—

SIMON

That's not what I meant.. Boros isn't exactly a Central planet, but the Alliance has one of their main shipyards there. Security's bound to be a little tighter than the border worlds we're used to.

MAL

Ain't plannin' on stealin' nothin' nor causin' no trouble. No reason any sort of security should concern themselves with this crew.

SIMON

My sister and I are fugitives, Captain. We have military, bounty hunters, and God knows what else on our tail.

MAL

Maybe I ain't makin' myself clear, Doctor. This ship is my ship, and it's goin' to Boros. You an' your sister don't need to be on it, you catch my meanin'.

Mal stalks away, pushing past Kaylee and Book to head to the stairs.

River moves up beside Simon, watching Mal leave.

RIVER

All hollowed out inside. Dead and gone. Deader than before...

## **EXT. HAVEN – DAY**

*Serenity* lifts off.

## **INT. SERENITY – SHUTTLE I – LATER**

The inside of the shuttle is being used for storage. Mal sits on a crate, looking at a small CAPTURE.

RIVER (VO, cont'd)

Took the most important bits when she left.

The capture shows a close-up of the beautiful face of INARA SERRA, who is looking straight at the "camera".

INARA (in capture)  
You promised to help me pack.

KAYLEE (OS, in capture)  
Honest, Inara, why do you have to leave?

Mal freezes the image and puts the capture down.

## **EXT. SPACE**

*Serenity* sails through the black.

## **INT. SERENITY – CARGO HOLD – SAME TIME**

Kaylee and Simon are on the upper catwalk, flirting awkwardly if their posture is any indication.

KAYLEE  
I'm just tellin' you what 'Nara told me.

SIMON  
I'm not denying that Inara said that, but she's not exactly typical for a Companion.

KAYLEE  
(lightly)  
And now suddenly you're an expert on Guild Law? With all your vast experience with Companions?

SIMON  
Yes. Well, no. Er, I mean, not... personal... experience, per se, but—

BOOK (OS)  
Am I interrupting something?

Kaylee smiles at the Shepherd, who is approaching them from the foredeck hall entrance.

KAYLEE  
Rescuing, more like.

She gives Simon a friendly poke in the chest.

BOOK  
Wash wanted me to let everyone know we're less than ten minutes from Boros.

KAYLEE  
(cheerily)  
I should probably make sure the engine ain't gonna  
explode or nothin'.

She heads off toward the aft hall exit, and Simon and Book watch her go.

BOOK  
So, you two still haven't...?

SIMON  
I don't know what you mean, Shepherd.

BOOK  
(sighs)  
I'm sure you don't, son.  
(beat)  
Do you know where the Captain is?

Simon glances to the airlock for the shuttle.

SIMON  
Probably cataloging inventory again.

BOOK  
Still using Inara's shuttle for storage?  
(off Simons nod)  
Gives him a reason to be there, I suppose.

### **INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE**

Mal and Book stand behind Wash, all of them look out the forward window.

MAL  
Well, ain't that a sight to chill the blood?

### **EXT. SPACE ABOVE BOROS**

Boros looms ahead, a small green-gray moon. Its airspace, a zero-gee SHIPYARD, is crowded with the activity of a dozens of small VEHICLES swarming around six ALLIANCE SUPER-CRUISERS.



## Act Two

### INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE – CONTINUOUS

Wash looks up at Mal nervously.

VOICE (via com)  
Unidentified Firefly-class vessel, please identify yourself.

BOOK  
Not to fret, son.

### EXT. SPACE ABOVE BOROS – SAME TIME

Upon closer inspection, it's clear that the Alliance super-cruisers are in various states of construction.

BOOK (VO, cont'd)  
Just an orbital shipyard.

### INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE – CONTINUOUS

Mal and Wash don't look particularly reassured.

BOOK (cont'd)  
Got the same right to be here as anyone.

VOICE (via com)  
This is Port Authority, unidentified vessel. Please respond.

Wash reaches for the com. Book quietly sits down at the copilot's station.

WASH (into com)  
Port Authority, this is *The Happy Trader*, captained by Leopold Harbatkin.

### EXT. SPACE ABOVE BOROS – SAME TIME

Serenity sails slowly past the first of the super-cruisers.

## **INT. SERENITY – COCKPIT – SAME TIME**

VOICE (via com)

Your inspection codes are invalid, *Happy Trader*.

Wash looks up at Mal, the two sharing a “We’re humped” look. Book leans forward in the copilot seat.

VOICE (via com, cont’d)

Best get that cleared up if you want to avoid a fine.

The relief in the bridge is palpable.

## **EXT. BOROS – TOWN – ESTABLISHING**

*Serenity* sails over an industrial town in the middle of a rocky desert.

VOICE (VO, via comm, cont’d)

You are cleared to land.

## **EXT. BOROS – PORT – ESTABLISHING**

*Serenity* sets down in a small port (most of the other ships are cargo haulers), near the Port Authority Terminal (a blocky, two story cement building).

VOICE (via com, cont’d)

Welcome to Boros, *Happy Trader*.

## **INT. BOROS – PORT AUTHORITY TERMINAL – SAME TIME**

A uniformed WORKER, one of four seated at their own terminals, watches *Serenity* settle down through a window.

WORKER (into com)

Enjoy your stay.

He clicks the com off, then turns to a WAVE MONITOR displaying a HATCHET-FACED MAN.

WORKER (to wave monitor)

Firefly-class, just like you asked for. Calling itself *The Happy Trader*.

HATCHET-FACED MAN (via wave monitor)

Coin’ll be in your account. As promised.

## **INT. SERENITY – CARGO HOLD – DAY**

Mal, Zoe, Jayne, Kaylee, Book, and Bernabe are in the cargo hold. The hover-mule is down on the floor, surrounded by tools and parts.

KAYLEE

Oh, Captain, come on! Please let me come! I'd love to meet the Sanchez Brothers. They're livin' legends!

MAL

An' they're gonna be livin' for a damned sight longer. You ain't comin', Kaylee, an' that is final.

KAYLEE

(resigned smile)

Please?

MAL

You got work to do here. Besides, this ain't no Central Planet, but there might be just as much trouble. Less of us in town, the better.

BERNABE

Mal, I really want to thank you...

MAL

We take care of our own. Always have.

(to Zoe)

Ship's yours. Heads down, stay quiet.

(to Jayne, pointedly)

Keep an eye on things.

## **EXT. BOROS – TOWN – STREETS – DAY**

Mal walks through town. Although not quite as crowded as Persephone or Beaumonde, Boros has a decidedly urban feel to it, the majority of the citizens downtrodden-looking laborers and mechanics. Horses pull carts loaded down with machine parts, and the entire industry of the town is tied to the orbital shipyard.

Interspersed through the crowd are local CONSTABLES, some on foot, some on horseback.

The Hatchet-Faced Man, wearing a cowboy hat and a distinctive black jacket, cuts through the crowd, following Mal from a safe distance.

## **INT. SERENITY – CARGO HOLD – DAY**

Kaylee has the hover-mule mostly back together, but there are still a handful of parts out. River stands by, watching, as Kaylee looks around the cargo hold for a particular part.

KAYLEE

You see the ventral power converter? About this big?

RIVER

Back together again, but not right. Parts are missing.  
Gone.

KAYLEE

(distracted)

Looks like a boxy little thing... Some cables and plugs...?

RIVER

Important parts. Lose them, leaves an empty place in  
Daddy.

Kaylee looks up at River, befuddled. And past her

ON THE UPPER CATWALK

Simon and Book look down, oblivious to the details of the conversation.

SIMON

—as if he’s making decisions simply to keep moving.

BOOK

Sometimes, moving forward is the only way we can stay  
afloat.

SIMON

I said moving, Shepherd. Not moving forward. It’s really  
as if... It’s barely been a month, but he’s so distant with  
you gone. You and Inara.

BOOK

How is Inara? Have any of you spoken with her?

SIMON

(evasive)

No. Not really.

## **EXT. BOROS – SANCHEZ BROTHERS SPACESHIP REPAIR FACILITY – DAY**

The size of a small space port, the Sanchez Brothers Spaceship Repair Facility is, despite its grand name, a run-down ramshackle affair that is basically a messy, greasy garage. It is home to four spaceships, all smaller than *Serenity*. Two are being repaired, one looks largely functional, and the last might as well be up on cement blocks. The perimeter of the facility is chained off, and a junkyard DOG paces, acting as guard.

## **INT. SANCHEZ BROTHERS SPACESHIP REPAIR FACILITY – DAY**

Mal is talking to two of the SANCHEZ BROTHERS (GOLLY—"the big one"—and ROLE—"the quiet one"). Based on their varying appearances and ethnicity, they are brothers in name only.

ROLE

It's good that you got him home, Mal.

GOLLY

(nodding, not the sharpest tool)

Family's important Mal.

PERCY, early 40s, the oldest of the three by a decade and clearly the leader, joins the cluster.

PERCY

Malcolm Reynolds! You don't call, you don't write!

MAL

Got me a genius mechanic. Don't need you boys no more.

They shake hands heartily.

PERCY

So you just turn your back on the boys helped you get that piece of *gos se* in the air in the first place? How's the ol' bird doin' anyway?

MAL

Still flyin', Perce.

## **INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE – DAY**

Wash and Bernabe sit in the pilot and copilot chairs.

WASH

But, I mean, what if you drop them? They're very squirmy. And moist. That seems like a recipe that might lead to a lot of the dropping.

BERNABE

They ain't eggs, Wash. They don't break. Sure do scream, though.

WASH

Imagine so.

(beat)

Thing of it is, we're ready. I mean, I think we're ready.

Well, okay, she's ready, Bern, but I have concerns.

(off Bernabe's nod to continue)

This is a crazy life we live. Is it really fair to a little one?

BERNABE

Ain't no safe place in the 'Verse, Wash.

WASH

See, that's what she said. I hate it when I'm wrong. But still, there's not safe, and there's <being fired at every day of the week and then, for a special treat on Sundays, grenades> not safe.

Beat.

ZOE (OS)

Am I interrupting anything, boys?

Zoe's at the door, cradling a trio of FIREARMS of different sizes.

BERNABE

Huh. I see your point.

WASH

Honey, you shouldn't have. What a beautiful bouquet!

ZOE

Not for you, dear. I thought Bern might want to pick out some iron.

## **INT. SANCHEZ BROTHERS SPACESHIP REPAIR FACILITY – DAY**

Mal and the Sanchez Brothers sit in folding chairs on the tarmac. Each has a semi-clean cup and Golly is pouring them another round of some brownish liquid from an ice-filled pitcher.

MAL

(wiping his mouth with his hand)  
You fellas still make the best jet-juice around. Much as I'd love to sit and palaver all day, like I said, my schedule's got a bit of tightness to it.

GOLLY

But we're gonna barbecue in a hour!

Mal looks suspiciously at the dog, which has come over, sniffing around for a sip of jet-juice.

PERCY

Don't want to slow a man with a mission, little brother.  
Let's get down to it.

MAL

We're tracking slavers, took the woman of a good friend of mine. Got the drop on one of their crew, said they do their business here on Boros.

PERCY

An' seein' as how our little family came together, you thought...

MAL

Thought you might have a will to point me in the right direction.

(off Percy's nod to continue)

Captain's name is Lachlan. Ran across his crew once or twice before. I think he might be part of a larger bunch.

Golly lowers his glass so the dog can drink from it.

PERCY

You'd be right about that. Part of the Admiral's crew.

ROLE

Admiral's a bit o' bad news.

MAL

Admiral?

PERCY

Slave turned slaver, if the rumors are true. <Utterly ruthless>. No respect for life at all.

ROLE

Still, Lachlan ain't bad, far as <feces-chewing> slavers go. Can hold a grudge, though.

Role pushes his chair back as the dog, totally dedicated to drinking from Golly's cup, almost knocks into him.

MAL

So you know him?

PERCY

Heard of him. Tryin' to run his own crew, get out from under the Admiral.

ROLE

He does hit Boros time and again, or so I hear.

MAL

Know where I can find him?

ROLE

Not sure.

PERCY

I was you, I'd try the Boneyard.

## **EXT. BOROS – BONEYARD – ESTABLISHING**

PERCY (VO, cont'd)

Used to be an Alliance military base back before the war.

The Boneyard sits in the middle of the desert. It looks exactly as described, an abandoned military base – tattered, decaying, almost haunted. We move through the rusting buildings and hulks of broken-down mules...

ROLE (VO)

Till some Browncoats got it in their heads to steal one of the super-cruisers.

PERCY (VO)

Couldn't control the gorram thing. Crashed right into the base. Left a <practically made by a troop of monkeys> mess of the whole place.

The heart of the Boneyard is a downed Alliance super-cruiser, tilted on it's side, crumbling, collapsing, rising up like a small mountain. The buildings nearby are damaged and wrecked, and a few smaller ships are on their sides or even turned over, collateral damage from the super-cruiser's fall.



ROLE (VO)

Nobody never bothered spendin' the money to clean it up.

### **EXT. BONEYARD – SUPER-CRUISER – ESTABLISHING**

Two spaceships sit in the shadow of the crumbling corpse of the super-cruiser. We've seen both before. One is LACHLAN'S SHIP, lean and dangerous if a bit battered, while the other is MILLIE'S SHIP, a Bulldog-class cargo hauler (the space-faring equivalent of a pick-up truck, a small cockpit set in front of and above a large boxy cargo hold).

### **EXT. BONEYARD – LACHLAN'S SHIP – DAY**

Lachlan's crew of a dozen SLAVERS lounges, keeping an eye on their catch of about four dozen restless PRISONERS. JESSE, a young slaver, comes out of Millie's ship.

LACHLAN

Everything set?

JESSE

Got the crosswirin' done, Captain. She'll fly for us easy.

LACHLAN

Good. I want to be out of here soon as the deal's done.  
(looks around)

Gives me a deep sense of unease, this place does.

Other slavers nod in agreement as Lachlan walks over to Mildred, who stands near EDGAR "CONNIE" CONSTANTINE, an elderly Asian man with long white hair.

LACHLAN (cont'd)

Ship's gonna be mine, little lady. First addition to my armada. I'm gonna enjoy breakin' her in. Just like I'm gonna enjoy breakin' you in.

Mildred glares.

JESSE

Thought we never kep' 'em, Captain.

Lachlan grabs Mildred by the chin.

LACHLAN

We'll make an exception, here, Jesse. This here's the filly done thwarted us at Haven.

MILDRED

Think you have what it takes to break me in, son? Don't know the first thing about women, do ya?

(smiling)

Spent too much time all cooped up in a can with just menfolk for company. Wonder what it is you boys do to each other on those long, lonely nights in the black?

Lachlan loses control, and slaps her hard. As she reels back, he stalks off.

LACHLAN

Buyer better be here soon, gorrammit!

Connie helps Mildred steady herself.

CONNIE

You all right, child? Don't taunt him. Perhaps he'll make it quick and painless.

MILDRED

You think I'm afraid of the likes of him? My husband's comin', and he's got friends. Powerful friends. They'll come for us. You'll see.

She looks up into the clear sky.

MILDRED (cont'd)

Nothin'll stop them.

### **EXT. BOROS – TOWN – STREETS – DAY**

Mal walks down the street, a man on a mission. He has a COM UNIT in one hand, and is carrying a THERMOS of jet-juice in the other.

MAL (into com)

We're takin' off soon as I'm back.

As soon as he begins to lower the com the Hatchet-Faced Man comes up behind him, smoothly drawing a gun and pointing it at the back of his head.

HATCHET-FACED MAN

Malcolm Reynolds, you are bound by law. Stand down.

## Act Three

### **EXT. BOROS – TOWN – STREETS – CONTINUOUS**

Mal's hands, still occupied by the com unit and the thermos, are over his head. A small crowd has started to take notice of the confrontation.

MAL

Listen, friend, I think you've got the wrong man.

HATCHET-FACED MAN

You will very carefully drop the objects in your hands and place your hands behind your head, Captain Reynolds.

MAL

Don't know who you think I am, but this is Leo Harbatkin you're talkin' too.

HATCHET-FACED MAN

Are you listening to me, Captain Reynolds?

MAL

I ain't—

HATCHET-FACED MAN

If you do not comply immediately, I will shoot you.

MAL

Shoot me? That don't hardly seem—

A FIGURE barrels out of the crowd and slams into the Hatchet-Faced Man. The figure is Jayne, and the gun goes flying.

### **INT. SERENITY – CARGO HOLD – SAME TIME**

Zoe, Bernabe, Book, Kaylee, Simon, and River are all in the cargo hold, mostly sitting around waiting. Zoe, Bernabe and Book are armed. River walks in a circle around the hover-mule, and Kaylee is making adjustments to a HARNESS which hangs from cables connected to the ceiling.

Zoe heads to the AIRLOCK CONTROLS and hits them, opening the lock and the lowering the ramp.

ZOE

We'll be taking off soon as the Captain and Jayne're back.  
(to Simon)  
Best get your sister squared away, Doctor.

RIVER

Don't want to go, Simon! I want to play!

BOOK

(checking his rifle)  
This isn't a game, child.

SIMON

Come on, *mei mei*.

Simon takes River by the arm and leads her off. She looks back at Book.

#### **EXT. BOROS – TOWN – STREETS – SAME TIME**

Jayne picks himself up and kicks the Hatchet-Faced Man. The crowd's growing.

JAYNE

Mal! This ain't even an Alliance guy!  
(points at the man, still on the ground)  
Look at the jacket. I think he's with them bounty hunters  
we run into on Toll Marden.

The jacket has a distinctive, almost military look to it, which can't be easily seen, since the Hatchet-Faced Man is writhing in pain.

MAL

Good thing I had you as a shadow, huh?

Jayne smiles like a puppy who's done good. There's a little commotion in the crowd.

JAYNE

What d'ya wanna do about this guy?

Before Mal can respond, four uniformed CONSTABLES, two on horseback, all armed with rifles, break through the crowd.

CONSTABLE

What's going on here?

MAL

<Why is my karma so bad>?

## **INT. SERENITY – CARGO HOLD – SAME TIME**

Zoe looks at Book and Bernabe, who are near the hover-mule.

ZOE

You ready for this?

(off their nods)

We move soon as the Captain and Jayne are back. Should be any time now.

Beat. Everyone looks at the open airlock doors expectantly. Mal and Jayne are late.

ZOE (cont'd)

Any time.

## **EXT. BOROS – TOWN – STREETS – DAY**

The Hatchet-Faced man is now standing, and he, Mal and Jayne are surrounded by a half-dozen CONSTABLES, including two still on horseback. A third horse, apparently belonging to the HEAD CONSTABLE, stands nearby. This cluster is, in turn, surrounded by a growing crowd.

Mal and the Hatchet-Faced Man both address the Head Constable.

MAL

Wanted fugitive? Like I said, sir, my name is Leo Harbatkin. My papers are all in order, although I must admit I ain't had my ship properly inspected for some time. I don't know who this man is or what he's—

HATCHET-FACED MAN

My name is Thaddeus Finney. I'm a bounty hunter, duly sanctioned by Alliance Military Intelligence on Osiris—

The constables laugh.

HEAD CONSTABLE

This ain't Osiris, son, and we sure as *gos se* ain't AMI.

MAL

Now, sir, if you'll just let me an' my man be on our way—

FINNEY

(frustrated)

I'm telling you, this man and his crew are wanted. They are harboring known fugitives—

JAYNE  
(feigning helplessness)  
Still don't know what he's talkin' about.

FINNEY  
At least call the port. You'll find a Firefly-class there. They  
have back-up onboard. Lock it down.

The Head Constable looks at one of the others, indicating he should make the call.  
That constable fades back, pulling out a bulky com unit.

HEAD CONSTABLE  
Wanted fugitive, huh?

FINNEY  
There's a sizable bounty.

The Head constable smiles, looks at the constables.

HEAD CONSTABLE  
P'rhaps me and my boys'll just look into that ourselves.

He slides his gun out of his holster and smiles menacingly at Finney.

### **INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE – DAY**

Wash sits up and looks out the front, window, not liking what he's seeing.

WASH (into com)  
Kaylee! Close us up!

### **INT. SERENITY – CARGO HOLD – SAME TIME**

Kaylee is finishing buckling Zoe into the harness, and Book and Bernabe are near  
the hover-mule.

WASH (via com, cont'd)  
*Ma shong* <Now>!

Kaylee looks

THROUGH THE AIRLOCK DOOR

Where we can see more than a dozen armed men, a mix of CONSTABLES and  
ALLIANCE SOLDIERS, heading for the ramp.

KAYLEE  
<That's just not good>!

Book, also seeing this, dives for the airlock controls, smacking them so the door starts to shut.

### **EXT. BOROS – TOWN – STREETS – DAY**

The constables fan out, surrounding Mal, Jayne, and Finney. Mal and Finney exchange a look: For now, they're on the same side.

They surge forward, catching the constables by surprise. As Mal decks the Head Constable (whose gun flies into the crowd), Jayne rushes past and throws himself at one of the constables on horseback, knocking the man to the ground.

The fight is fast and furious. The constables are not expecting an alliance between Mal and Finney, and Jayne wheels the horse into them from behind, barely able to control the animal.

MAL  
(dodging the horse)  
What the—? Jayne!

JAYNE  
Sorry, Mal!

With most of the constables out of the way, Finney turns his attention to Mal... But Mal sees it coming and pushes him into Jayne's path. The horse rears, and Finney falls to the ground.

Before the constables or Finney can recover, Mal mounts the Head Constable's horse. He turns to Jayne and indicates that they should get the hell out of there. As the two men plow past the crowd on horseback, Mal pulls out his com.

MAL (into com)  
Wash?! We got trouble!

### **INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE – SAME TIME**

Wash, working at the controls, doesn't look up.

WASH (into com)  
That a fact, Captain?

**EXT. BOROS – TOWN – STREETS – DAY**

Mal has broken away from the crowd about and is about to respond when a bullet narrowly misses his head.

JAYNE  
Mal!

MAL (into com)  
Ain't it always?

Mal looks back where Jayne is pointing. Finney's up, armed, and angry.

**EXT. BOROS – PORT AUTHORITY TERMINAL – DAY**

Serenity takes off as the constables and Alliance soldiers fire uselessly.

**INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE – SAME TIME**

Wash is calm as ever at the controls.

WASH (into com)  
Can you make it to the Boneyard?

**EXT. BOROS – TOWN – STREETS – SAME TIME**

Mal and Jayne rush through town on horseback, scattering passers-by. Mal, clearly the better of the two riders by a large margin, barely clears a MULE laden down with crates of fruit.

MAL (into com)  
Yeah.

Jayne is forced to pull up short as the vehicle slowly moves by.

JAYNE  
Mal!

Mal slows and turns to look back at Jayne.

MAL (into com)  
Well... Maybe.

As Jayne tries to work his way around the mule, Finney, now on horseback himself, appears around a corner behind them.



Without hesitation, Mal charges back, apparently heading straight at Finney. Finney sees this and spurs his horse to move faster.

Jayne makes his way around the mule, which both Mal and Finney rush toward.

At the last second, Mal pulls his horse up short, quickly draws his gun and fires a single shot at the mule—

—severing the strap holding the crates of fruit in place. Mal rushes to catch up with Jayne while Finney is barely able to keep his footing as produce tumbles around him.

### **INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE – DAY**

WASH (into com)  
We'll see you there, Captain.

### **EXT. BOROS – EDGE OF TOWN – DAY**

*Serenity* roars overhead and past Mal and Jayne. Mal's horse rears as the ship flies overhead, giving us a Big Damned Hero Moment™ that could be the closing shot of Season Two's opening credit sequence.



**EXT. BONEYARD – LACHLAN’S SHIP – DAY**

Lachlan and his boys look up at the sound of an approaching ship.

LACHLAN  
Wha—?

JESSE  
That the buyers?

Lachlan shades his eyes and sees *Serenity* roaring in.

LACHLAN  
<Monkey-rutting bastards>! No!

**INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE – DAY**

WASH (into com)  
Ready, honey?

ZOE (OS, via com)  
Just tell me when.

**EXT. BONEYARD – DAY**

*Serenity* swoops low over the wreckage of the super-cruiser. Zoe drops down from the ship’s belly, harnessed and wired to the ship, wearing goggles, gun in hand.

Even before her feet touch down, placing her in a sniper’s nest in the super-cruiser’s mangled structure, she’s firing down, picking off slavers.

BELOW HER

Slavers run for cover, while the prisoners just run in every direction.

**EXT. BOROS – WILDERNESS – DAY**

Mal and Jayne head across a rocky plain at breakneck speed, Mal in the lead.

**EXT. BONEYARD – SUPER CRUISER – DAY**

Zoe pauses long enough to unsnap her harness, then begins to fire down again, cautiously making her way to the next sniper position down.

### **EXT. BONEYARD – SAME TIME**

*Serenity*, airlock doors open, dives lower... so low she almost touches the ground. As she does so—

The hover-mule (Book in the pilot's seat, Bernabe next to him) jets out of the airlock. Book and Bernabe fire, more for effect than anything, as the vehicle heads toward the scattering prisoners.

Chaos ensues as Zoe fires down, the hover-mule slews around, and prisoners scatter. The slavers begin to retreat toward the two ships.

### **EXT. BOROS – WILDERNESS – SAME TIME**

Mal and Jayne continue their mad dash toward the Boneyard. Dust kicks up to Jayne's left as a bullet hits. Finney's still on their trail.

### **EXT. BONEYARD – SAME TIME**

Mildred and Connie try to find a safe haven in the wreck of the super-cruiser.

Lachlan, supported by Jesse and another slaver, appears from the chaos. He decks Connie, sending the old man flying, then reaches forward and grabs Mildred.

LACHLAN  
You're coming with me!

MILDRED  
Don't think so, you <bastard>!

The two of them struggle.

### **ACROSS THE FIELD**

Bernabe sees what's going on and shouts to Book. The Shepherd nods and begins to push the hover-mule in the direction of Lachlan and Mildred, who are still

### **IN THE SHADOW OF THE SUPER-CRUISER**

Lachlan sees them coming.

LACHLAN  
Jesse!

Jesse throws a GRENADE at the hover-mule. The grenade goes off and the hover-mule goes flying.

### **EXT. BOROS – WILDERNESS – SAME TIME**

Finney's getting closer as the three riders approach the Boneyard.

### **EXT. BOROS – BONEYARD – DAY**

The hover-mule lands with a sickening CRUNCH that means it'll require Kaylee's tender care soon enough. Book is shocked to see that he's alone in the vehicle.

BOOK

Bernabe!

THROUGH THE SMOKE OF THE GRENADE

He can see Bernabe on the ground, and Zoe rushing to check on him. Book tries to move toward them, but Jesse pulls out another grenade, forcing Book to head in the opposite direction.

### **EXT. BONEYARD – OUTSKIRTS – DAY**

As Mal and Jayne reach the outskirts of the Boneyard, Finney gets off a lucky shot, hitting Jayne in the shoulder from behind. The big mercenary spins on the horse and is thrown from its back. He tumbles and lands in the dirt with a grunt.

### **EXT. BONEYARD – SAME TIME**

Book tilts his head, having heard the gunfire. His eyes narrow and he wheels the hover-mule toward the sound of the gunshot.

He doesn't get very far before the world around him GOES DARK.

Book slows the mule and looks up—

### **SERIES OF SHOTS**

—Mal, returning to help the injured Jayne, looks up as things get dark.

—Zoe is just helping Bernabe up when everything turns to nighttime. Both look up.

—Lachlan has started to drag Mildred toward his ship, but she manages to almost get away as the slaver is distracted by the sun being blotted out.

**INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE – SAME TIME**

Wash looks very concerned as the bridge darkens.

WASH  
Um... Guys?

**EXT. BONEYARD – SAME TIME**

*Serenity* hovers over the battle, in a position to block either of the grounded ships from taking off.

But above, casting a dark shadow on *Serenity* and the Boneyard, is an ALLIANCE SUPER-CRUISER, disgorging a dozen GUNSHIPS.



**EXT. ABOVE THE BONEYARD – ESTABLISHING**

A dozen gunships, pouring from the belly of the super-cruiser, swoop down.

**EXT. BONEYARD – OUTSKIRTS – SAME TIME**

Finney looks up.

FINNEY  
What the—?

Mal SLAMS his horse into Finney's. Both men are knocked from their steeds.

**EXT. BONEYARD – DAY**

Zoe's attention returns to the chaos around her. She helps Bernabe up with one hand, firing her gun with the other. She takes down a slaver near the entrance of Mildred's Bulldog. Two slavers.

ZOE  
On the ship, everyone!

In the crowd, Connie sees that Zoe's cleared a path to the Bulldog and starts directing the freed prisoners.

ZOE (cont'd)  
Bern, we need to—

But Bernabe is nowhere to be seen.

### **INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE – SAME TIME**

Wash sighs in the darkened cockpit and starts flipping switches.

WASH  
(to himself)  
<Another day in paradise>.  
(into com)  
Kaylee, get ready. We may need to go to full burn. Very, very soon.

KAYLEE (via com)  
On it!

WASH (into com)  
Honey? How's it going down there? We've got a minute, maybe two, til the first of those gunships is within firing distance. I don't know about you, but I don't really want to be their welcome mat.

ZOE (via com)  
We're not going without the Captain.  
(beat)  
And Jayne.

WASH (into com)  
Any idea where he—um, they—are?

BOOK (via com)  
I believe I can take care of that.

### **EXT. BONEYARD – A DIFFERENT PART – SAME TIME**

Book guns the hover-mule's engine.

### **EXT. BONEYARD – MILDRED'S SHIP – SAME TIME**

Four slavers shoot from protected positions. Zoe returns fire, covering the last of the escaped prisoners as Connie motions them onto Mildred's ship.

CONNIE  
Go! Go!

ZOE  
(looking around)  
We missing anyone?

CONNIE  
There!

Zoe looks where Connie is pointing

NEAR LACHLAN'S SHIP

Where Lachlan, Jesse and another slaver have almost made it to their ship, dragging Mildred with them.

### **EXT. BONEYARD – OUTSKIRTS – DAY**

Mal dusts himself up, pointing his gun down at Finney.

MAL  
Who the hell are you guys?

FINNEY  
You're not getting anything from me.

MAL  
Really? 'Cause, see, I have a gun, and you don't.

JAYNE (OS)  
Aw, come on, Mal! Just shoot 'im already!

Mal looks over at Jayne, shot in the shoulder and in pain, trying to pick himself up off the ground.

JAYNE (cont'd)  
Don't we got enough <pieces of feces> doggin' us?

Mal considers.

MAL  
The argument is compelling.

He points the gun at Finney.

BOOK (OS)  
Wait!

**EXT. OUTSKIRTS – LACHLAN’S SHIP – SAME TIME**

The slavers look up as Zoe shoots the third one. Mildred pulls free, socks Lachlan in the jaw, and runs.

LACHLAN  
Get back here, you bitch!

He runs after her.

LACHLAN (cont’d)  
I’m not gonna let you—

He’s just reaching for Mildred when Bernabe steps out of the dust and shadows.

BERNABE  
Get away from my wife!

He shoots the stunned Lachlan in the chest.

ACROSS THE BONEYARD

Zoe watches Mildred and Bernabe hug for a beat, then glances up at the approaching gunships.

ZOE  
Come on! Time enough for that later!

**EXT. BONEYARD – OUTSKIRTS – SAME TIME**

Mal stands over Finney, Jayne on one side, Book (in the hover-mule) on the other.

BOOK  
Let him go, son.

JAYNE  
Gorrammit, Mal!

BOOK  
It’s not worth it.

JAYNE  
Think he’d give it a second thought?

Mal looks down at Finney. Finney glares back. Beat.

Mal kicks Finney in the ribs. Hard. Finney howls in pain and balls up.



MAL  
Stay down.  
(to Jayne)  
Let's get the hell outta here.

**EXT. BONEYARD – DAY**

The Bulldog lifts off.

**INT. MILDRED'S SHIP – BRIDGE – SAME TIME**

Mildred's at the controls, Bernabe next to her, Zoe and Connie crowding in behind. Mildred is trying to work on the controls, but Bernabe wants to hold her hand. She shoos him away, and Zoe smiles and shakes her head.

MILDRED (into com)  
Everyone's accounted for. But if any of the slavers—

WASH (via com)  
Don't worry about it—

**INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE – SAME TIME**

Wash leans back.

WASH (cont'd)  
I'm not going anywhere yet anyway.

**EXT. BONEYARD – SECONDS LATER**

As Mildred's ship blasts away, *Serenity* dives low, her airlock doors open and ramp down.

**EXT. ABOVE THE BONEYARD – SAME TIME**

Mildred's Bulldog roars through a pack of ALLIANCE GUNSHIPS. Most of them continue down, but a trio veer off and turn to pursue the Bulldog.

**EXT. BONEYARD – SECONDS LATER**

*Serenity* sits waiting, while nine gunships roar down from the sky.

### **INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE – SAME TIME**

Wash taps his fingers nervously.

WASH  
Any time now. Any time.

### **INT. SERENITY – CARGO HOLD – SAME TIME**

The hover-mule rattles up the ramp, scraping the sides of the airlock.

MAL  
Watch it, Preacher! This thing's expensive!

BOOK  
Sorry!

MAL  
Next time, I drive!

Simon, near the airlock controls, jumps back, and hits the button to close the ramp.

SIMON (into com)  
They're on!

WASH (via com)  
It's about time!

### **EXT. BONEYARD – SAME TIME**

Staying at ground level, *Serenity* roars off. The gunships try to hem her in, but they're not expecting Wash's forward push. One of them narrowly avoids slamming into Lachlan's ship.

The gunship right behind it isn't so lucky.

### **EXT. ABOVE THE BONEYARD – SECONDS LATER**

Mildred's ship is on full evasive, pursued by three gunships. *Serenity* blasts up and joins her, pursued by two ships of her own.

### **INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE – SAME TIME**

Mal and Book join Wash.

WASH  
Glad to have you back, Captain.

MAL  
Everyone get away clean?

Book quietly sits down in the copilot seat.

WASH  
"Get away" is such a flexible term, isn't it? But, hey, we helped rescue some folks from slavers, so that might work in our favor during the sentencing.

Mal claps him on the shoulder.

MAL  
Come on, Wash, look on the bright side. Number of ships out there, it's a lot more likely they'll shoot us down than catch us!

Book begins to type on the copilot's keyboard.

## **EXT. SPACE**

As they break atmo, it's not looking good for our heroes. *Serenity* and Mildred's Bulldog are pursued by a pack of five gunships.

## **INT. SERENITY – INFIRMARY – SAME TIME**

Simon works on Jayne's injury.

JAYNE  
Swear, Doc, Captain was ready to pull the trigger 'til Shepherd showed and queered things right up.

SIMON  
(focusing on the injury)  
Yes, we should be very proud of our Captain. Who wouldn't want to be on a ship captained by a sociopath?

The ship shakes and both of them look up.

## **INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE – SAME TIME**

MAL  
Near miss?

WASH  
(nods)  
See, Captain? They do want us alive!

Book hits a key and leans back.

#### **EXT. SPACE**

The gunships continue to pursue *Serenity* and Mildred's ship—

And then they stop.

They break off pursuit and head back to Boros.

#### **INT. SERENITY – BRIDGE – SAME TIME**

Wash and Mal look at each other, confused. Then both look at Book, who is studiously looking away from the keyboard. He gives them a "Who, me?" look.

MAL  
Preacher? What did you—?

BOOK  
(shrugs)  
They must have realized we weren't interesting prey.  
Shouldn't we be getting back to Haven now?

#### **EXT. HAVEN – ESTABLISHING – NIGHT**

*Serenity* and Mildred's Bulldog land.

#### **EXT. HAVEN – NIGHT**

It's mealtime, and everyone's happy. Among the citizens, Derek and Jayne are hanging out, and River wanders through the throng. Zoe and Wash are with Mildred and Bernabe (who can't keep his hands off his wife) and their two CHILDREN. Kaylee's also around, but Simon is nowhere to be seen.

ON A HILL OVERLOOKING THE MEAL

Mal and Book stand together, smoking cigars.

BOOK  
You did the right thing, Mal, not killing that man.

MAL

Yeah, well... Right don't make it smart. Jayne's right about one thing. Enemies. We got more'n our fair share.

BOOK

Killing him wouldn't've changed anything, son. Unless I miss my guess, he's part of an outfit called the Orion Reconnaissance Commandoes.

MAL

The Orion Recondos? Ain't they Alliance military?

BOOK

They were attached to KISS during the war, true enough, but started hunting afterward. I suspect your man joined up at that time.

MAL

Why am I not surprised you'd know so much about bounty hunters?

BOOK

Preacher needs to know all sorts of things, Mal. All sorts of things.

### **INT. SERENITY – SIMON'S ROOM – SAME TIME**

Simon sits in front of a WAVE, recording a message.

SIMON (into wave)

—concerned by the Captain's recent behavior. He's growing callous... Ruthless. I'd appreciate advice on how to best proceed.

He hits the "SEND" button.

### **EXT. BONEYARD – NIGHT**

The area is brightly lit as dozens of ALLIANCE SOLDIERS move through the area, apparently looking for any straggler slavers.

Finney stands manacled between two Alliance soldiers, facing CHIEN, an Alliance Captain (who has pursued *Serenity* since late in Season One).

FINNEY

Don't know anything about a girl. What did you say her name was?

CHIEN

I didn't.

Chien turns to another man, who stands in the shadows.

A MYSTERIOUS MAN, tall and powerful, dressed in dark military clothing with no insignia, looks at Chien and Finney. Chien's posture is deferential, clearly indicating that he reports to the Mysterious Man.

MYSTERIOUS MAN

Tell your employer to stay out of my way. You can deal with Reynolds if he survives.

### **EXT. HAVEN – NIGHT**

With dinner winding down, Mal approaches Mildred and Bernabe's table. Zoe is holding their baby daughter, and their son is playing with Wash, but the boy runs at Mal as he approaches.

Bernabe claps Mal on the shoulder and smiles.

MILDRED

Connie says thanks. You ever need a favor, a place to lie low, his trading post is home.

(beat)

Thanks for coming, Mal.

MAL

Aw, shucks, little lady. Why wouldn't I?

(ruffles Mildred's son's hair)

We're all one big happy family.

He offers them a smile, then walks away, isolated and alone in the crowd.

### **BLACKOUT**